

Chinese Rumi scholar to lecture in Tehran and Tabriz

Tehran Times Culture Desk

TEHRAN — Chinese scholar Mu-hong Yan is slated to deliver lectures at a congress to be hosted jointly by Tehran and Tabriz from October 28 until 30 to commemorate Rumi's 800th birth anniversary.

The theme of the discourses will be pacifism as depicted in the Masnavi, the masterpiece of the Persian poet Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

A Persian language graduate from the University of Peking, Mu-hong, 41, works for the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

This prominent Chinese scholar has translated a number of chapters of Rumi's Masnavi and The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam into Chinese and has also authored over 30 articles on Persian classical literature.

One of Mu-hong's articles examines the concepts of "lover" and "wine" in Persian poetry.

Modern Persian literary works including Sadeq Hedayat's "Blind Owl" and Hushang Golshiri's "Prince Ehtejab" have also been rendered into Chinese by this prolific translator.

Iran and Brazil plan joint cinematic program

Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — Deputy Culture Minister for Cinematic Affairs Mohammadreza Jafari-Jelveh met with Carlos Augusto Calil, the City of Sao Paulo's Secretary of Culture, during Iran's first Cinéma Vérité Festival in Tehran.

Jafari-Jelveh referred to the art of cinema as an effective mode of expression for Brazil and Iran to use to highlight problems in the modern world.

He pointed out that Iran and Brazil can make the best use of their cinematic skills to seek justice in a world rife with injustice.

"Although Hollywood still dominates the film industry, our cinema is the cinema of friendship, kindness, and sincerity. People have lost interest in the repetitive themes of today's movies and are attracted to our type of productions. The world is looking for a new, fresh look."

He continued, saying that Iran and Brazil must try to pave the ground for further activities, "We must begin co-productions as soon as possible. We can hold festivals and cultural weeks, and screen movies in both countries."

Carlos Augusto Calil also expressed his pleasure over his visit to Iran and said, "I am now in the country whose culture I have admired for years. I am pleased that its cinema has become the representative of this culture. I live in a city whose people like to watch Iranian movies."

He explained that movies by veteran Iranian filmmakers are greatly appreciated in Brazil. He added that most movies are available in Brazil through French distributors.

He expressed hope that Iranian distributors will in the future be able to send movies directly to Brazil so that the country can make wider use of them.

Augusto Calil also announced that his country is willing to host various kinds of Iranian art exhibitions.

Iran's first Cinéma Vérité Festival was held from October 15 to 20 at Tehran's Felestin and Qiam cinema halls.

CGIE to republish ancient map of Persian Gulf



Tehran Times Culture Desk

TEHRAN — The Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia (CGIE) is to republish an ancient map of the Persian Gulf.

The map was designed by a French cartographer in 1724 in Paris, said head of CGIE Kazem Musavi Bojnordi.

He noted that the center is planning to donate copies to universities, libraries, and scientific centers in Iran and across the world.

A historical map of the Persian Gulf, which had been drawn by Dutchman Ioannes van Keulen (1654-1715) and published in 1753, is depicted in a file photo downloaded from www.helmink.com.

Iran and Armenia to hold medieval literature convention

Tehran Times Culture Desk

TEHRAN — Director of Armenia's National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Literature Azat K. Eghiazaryan and Iran's cultural attaché in Yerevan Reza Atufi plan to hold a convention focusing on Iranian and Armenian medieval literature.

Eghiazaryan stated that Armenian medieval literature, particularly its poetry, was greatly influenced by the richness of Persian literary works of that epoch. The first convention will be held in Iran in May 2008 and five Armenian literary scholars will be attending the event.

Eghiazaryan is of the opinion that this joint literary investigation will strengthen the cultural bonds between the two countries.

Atufi welcomed the proposition and added that the Iranian cultural attaché's office is willing to support programs highlighting the cultural commonalities of the two countries.

He also mentioned that there is to be a convention on Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi at the venue of Armenia's National Academy of Sciences on November 6 which is to be inaugurated by Armenia's Minister of Education and Science Levon Mkrtchyan.

Hollywood union authorized to strike

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Members of Hollywood's film and television writers union have overwhelmingly voted to authorize a strike anytime after their contract expires at the end of the month.

More than 5,000 members of the Writers Guild of America cast ballots, with 90 percent voting in favor of authorizing the strike, the union said Friday evening. Members voted Thursday.

"Writers do not want to strike, but they are resolute and prepared to take strong, united action to defend our interests," guild President Patric Verrone said in a news release. "What we must have is a contract that gives us the ability to keep up with the financial success of this ever-expanding global industry."

Since July, the guild has been in talks with film studios and production companies represented by the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers. Both sides

acknowledge they have not made progress.

Nick Counter, the alliance's president, said he was not surprised by the vote.

"Our focus is on negotiating a reasonable agreement with the WGA," he said in a news release. A key issue dividing producers and writers, as well as actors, whose contract expires next June, is compensation for DVD sales and productions that get distributed on the Internet or in other new media formats.

The writers' current three-year contract expires Oct. 31, and their vote gives the union's leaders authorization to call a strike anytime after that day.

Studios and TV networks have accelerated filming of shows and movies and begun stockpiling scripts in case of a strike.

The last strike in 1988 lasted 22 weeks. Losses to the industry were put at \$500 million.

Branko biopic "Varazdin Pedestrians" to be screened at FICTS

Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — The Iranian sports documentary "Varazdin Pedestrians" is to participate at the 25th Milano International FICTS Festival, a film gala devoted to sports films, being held from October 27 to November 1 in Italy.

Directed by Milad Sadr-Ameli and Arash Yaqmaian, the film is based on a biography of Branko Ivankovic, the former Croat coach of the national Iranian football team.

Sadr-Ameli previously made the sports documentary "Ciro without Glasses" featuring the former head coach of Iran, Miroslav Blazevic, also a Croat trainer.



Folk artist Yusuf Islam to sing about deportation

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — British folk singer Yusuf Islam hopes to return to the United States in December to record a song inspired by his deportation three years ago, he said on Friday.

Islam, who changed his name from Cat Stevens after he became a Muslim in 1978, was denied entry to the United States "on national security grounds" in September 2004. His inbound flight was diverted to Maine and he and his daughter were taken off the plane. Islam had been planning to record in Nashville with country artists, including Dolly Parton.

The peace activist's visa situation has been cleared up, and he later returned to the United States to promote his 2006 comeback "Another Cup," his first mainstream pop album in 28 years.

The 59-year-old London resident has started work on a follow-up, and has written a song about "my little excursion" called "Boots and Sand." Another attempt at Nashville is in the cards.

"I'm planning hopefully to drop in there and finally close that circle (in) December," Islam told Reuters.

Parton will "not necessarily" be on the record, "but she'll be implied in the lyric," Islam said.

The album is off to a cracking start, and Islam is rocking out a little after buying an electric guitar, a Stevie Ray Vaughan Telecaster manufactured by Fender. For most of his career, he was content to strum an acoustic, but he said his son has been encouraging him to experiment.

"At the moment, with the way that we recorded yesterday, doing a song a day, it could be finished in a month ... (and) out just before summer," he said. "But you never know with these things."

The new album is vying for his attention with a planned stage musical called "Moonshadow," which will tell the story of the "search for the perfect world" through both old songs and new. The title character, named after one of Islam's best known songs, is a guide for the hero, named Stormy.

In the meantime, Islam has just released a DVD featuring his first full U.K. concert in 28 years as well as a BBC documentary and various video clips. "Yusuf's Cafe Session" boasts live versions of such classics as "Father & Son" and "Where Do the Children Play" performed in an intimate session last March at London's Porchester Hall.

"The Sun Shines for All" outshines at Italian filmfest

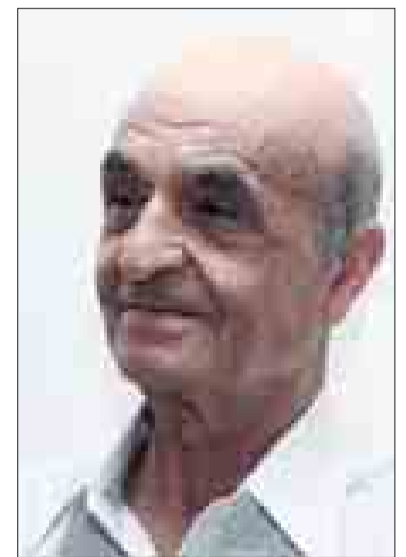
Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — The Iranian movie "The Sun Shines for All" by Abbas Rafei took best film award at the 10th edition of the Religion Today Film Festival which ran from October 6-20 in Trento, Italy.

The movie also received a second award in the "Women and Religion" section of the festival, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Saturday.

Rafei once said with reference to the theme of this film, "I wanted to portray that we are passengers on an endless road in this world, and that someone guides us along this path."

Iran entered 13 films at the festival, including "Jesus Christ" by Nader Talebzadeh, "M for Mother" by Rasul Mollaqolipour, and "God Is Close" by Ali Vazirian.



Satirist Golestani dies at 81

Tehran Times Culture Desk

TEHRAN — Satirist Hossein Golestani, who wrote for the Iranian magazines Towfiq and Gol Aqa, has died at 81.

He was a graduate of the army college and began his career at Towfiq in 1947. He wrote under the pseudonyms "Ala Babil" and "Ababil".

In 1991 he started to pursue his career at Gol Aqa, a satirical magazine established by the prominent satirist Kiumars Saberi in the early years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Gol Aqa closed down for several years, but Saberi's daughter reopened it and Golestani resumed his work there.

Gol Aqa has recently published two books of Golestani's satires — "The Clever Kid" and "The Donkey Rider Jackal".

Rome festival honors Loren with career award

ROME (Reuters) — When the Rome film festival forgot to invite Sophia Loren for its first edition last year, she was said to be furious at the snub.

This year, Rome made good by giving Loren a lifetime achievement award and organizing a series of events to honor the half-century career of an actress who has been called Italy's best-known export after pasta.

"It's the first time I have had a career award in Italy. I hope I deserve it," the Oscar-winning star, wearing an Armani black chiffon dress, said late on Thursday at a red carpet ceremony.

Friday was "Loren Day" at the festival, with the actress answering questions from 700 fans and the screening of "Marriage Italian Style," one of her most famous films, kicking off a retrospective of her works.

Loren won an Oscar in 1962 for her tragic portrayal of a war-time mother in Italian director Vittorio De Sica's neo-realistic classic "La Ciociara," which was titled "Two Women" for British and U.S. audiences.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Loren with De Sica and actor Marcello Mastroianni made a signature trio creating classic social comedies such as "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" (1963) and "Marriage Italian Style" (1964).

More than 10 years later she again captivated audiences with her performance in "A Special Day," directed by Ettore Scola. She was reunited with Mastroianni in Robert Altman's 1994 satire about fashion, "Pret-a-Porter" (Ready-to-wear).